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Findings on career motivations and satisfactions of junior college teachers, based on questionnaire and interview data obtained from a random sample of Minnesota faculty members, including 130 persons teaching in the 11 junior colleges of the State. Taken as a whole, the findings indicate the need to publicize the purposes and programs of junior colleges and to recruit able young people to the faculties of these institutions.					
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Career Motivations and Satisfactions of Junior College Teachers

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ALTHOUGH most junior or community colleges were established after the first world war, the two-year college has become the most rapidly growing form of American post-high school education. Still more dramatic gains in enrollment will occur in the next decade, with many of these institutions expected to double or triple in size. Unless junior colleges can also manage to recruit and hold qualified staff members, this expansion will not serve its intended educational purpose.

The study reported below, which was aimed at discovering the reasons why individuals join college faculties and how they now view this career choice, involved a random sample of faculty members in Minnesota's 32 recognized high institutions, 11 of which are junior colleges.¹ Of the 94 per cent of this sample of the teaching faculty who replied to a four-page questionnaire, 506 were serving in private liberal arts colleges, the state colleges, or

the University of Minnesota, and 130 in junior colleges. In addition, almost 100 of the respondents were interviewed, including faculty members in five junior colleges. Major similarities and differences between persons teaching in junior colleges and in more advanced programs will be explored in the present article and their meaning suggested for future recruitment efforts.²

Background Information. Like their colleagues in four-year colleges, most of these junior college teachers were men (70 per cent), and their median age (45 years) is quite typical for college teachers throughout the country. Significantly more of these junior college teachers were born in Minnesota (45 vs. 30 per cent of the four-year group)³, and fewer came

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¹ John E. Stecklein and Ruth E. Eckert, *An Exploratory Study of Factors Influencing Choice of College Teaching as a Career* (Report of a study conducted under a grant from the Cooperative Research Program, U. S. Office of Education), Bureau of Institutional Research, University of Minnesota, Jan. 1958.

² All differences that gave promise of being statistically significant were tested, and those that are mentioned without qualification satisfy the .01 level of confidence. Those that meet the .05 criterion will also be noted as suggestive of possible differences.

³ To save space in future citations of percentages, the first figure given will refer to Minnesota's junior college teachers and the

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from the Northeast and foreign countries. Their parents had had substantially less formal schooling, with almost three-fifths of both the fathers and mothers reported as not finishing high school. Only 12 per cent of the fathers and none of the mothers of these junior college staff members had graduated from college, which was significantly below the correlate figures for four-year staffs. That junior college teachers tend to be an upwardly mobile group is also suggested by information regarding their fathers' occupations, where more were reported in the skilled trades (43 vs. 32 per cent for the four-year group), and fewer in managerial or professional work.

Choice of College Teaching. Only a few individuals in the 32 colleges studied reported that they had ever thought, as high school students, of college teaching as a possible career, and just over a third said that they had given any serious consideration to this field prior to college graduation. Although future junior college teachers did not differ from their colleagues in four-year institutions on this point, significantly fewer said that as undergraduates they had viewed college teaching as a "highly attractive" career for themselves or for other people. As one chemistry teacher phrased it, "Being a farm boy, my dream of being a high school teacher was quite a jump from the intellectual and social status to which my family was accustomed, and I never dreamed of going beyond it."⁴

second to those teaching in programs requiring four years or longer.

⁴ All quotations used in the present article have been drawn from the interview transcripts or free-response questionnaire com-

Prospective junior college teachers had shown considerably more interest, as students, in careers in public school teaching, for 48 per cent of these individuals reported this as their career goal at entrance to college, and 58 per cent at graduation from college. A physics teacher hypothesized that this high concentration in teaching may have been due to the fact that many families, like his own, "made a fetish of working for yourself; and I couldn't afford the expensive training or capital needed to launch out in some other field." This interest in teaching usually accounted for later decisions to join a college faculty, for again a notably higher percentage of junior college teachers than of other groups stated that they had sought the opportunity to work with college-age youth (72 vs. 46 per cent for the four-year group).

Many individuals in both junior and four-year colleges commented that some teacher had greatly influenced their vocational thinking, with examples cited from all levels of schooling. Occasionally it was an elementary or high school teacher who had stimulated this interest; in other instances a respected undergraduate or graduate professor had counseled the individual or given him an opportunity to teach, which had encouraged him to plan a career in this field. Significantly fewer junior college instructors, on the other hand, had been influenced by a desire to pursue research or to continue advanced studies in their particular field.

Chance happenings were often the decisive factor, with a higher percentage of junior college teachers than of faculties

ments obtained from junior college faculty members.

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elsewhere indicating that they "had just drifted into college teaching" or "were here by chance," having been offered a college job they had not sought. As one history teacher observed, "I hadn't considered college teaching because I felt that it necessitated a doctor's degree . . . but a position at this institution happened to be open and I leaped at the opportunity." Illustrative of "chance" happenings were a counselor hastily recruited from a local V.A. Guidance Center, a high school industrial arts instructor who was commandeered when the regular college staff member became ill, and a principal and director of music in a rural church school who was surprised and pleased by invitation to join his denomination's college staff. To use this man's words, "In these schools the instructor usually does not seek the job, but rather the job seeks the instructor."

Preparation for Present Position. Junior college faculty members also trained somewhat differently for their jobs than did their colleagues in four-year institutions. Significantly more of the junior college staff had pursued their baccalaureate and advanced studies at north-central institutions, particularly at publicly supported colleges and universities. More had also satisfied the usual state requirements for secondary school teaching, but fewer had completed advanced programs of study. A sixth (16 per cent) of these junior college staff members, for example, had not yet earned their master's degrees, as contrasted with seven per cent of those teaching in four-year colleges. The most pronounced difference was in earned doctorates (4 vs. 44 per cent), which shows that Minnesota junior colleges are not

presently attracting many persons with the highest earned academic degree.

Several of the interviewees characterized themselves as "frustrated graduate students," for although they had completed most of the course work for the doctorate, they saw little hope, with their heavy work loads and expanding family responsibilities, of ever writing a dissertation. As an English teacher observed, "We have no time for contemplation, to say nothing of trying to do any writing." A history teacher also noted that the Ph.D. degree would not bring any substantial reward locally, and that he had no desire to move to the typical liberal arts or state college where salary schedules were even more depressed.

About the same proportion of faculty members in the junior and four-year colleges had specialized in various subject fields, and close to half in each group had received some type of special honor or recognition as undergraduates. But prospective junior college faculty members received much less financial aid in their graduate studies. Personal savings usually financed their advanced studies (62 vs. 42 per cent of the four-year group reported this), with many fewer of the prospective junior college faculty members receiving scholarships, fellowships, or appointments as graduate assistants or regular staff members at the university involved. In consequence, most of these future junior college teachers pursued their advanced studies on a part-time basis, with the growing sense of frustration and discouragement that this often brings.

Nature of Present Job. More than nine-tenths (92 per cent) of the junior college staff were either classified as instructors or

were teaching in schools that do not use academic ranks, which is far above the 21 per cent so classified in the four-year colleges. Except for a significantly higher concentration of junior college teachers in the natural sciences (32 vs. 19 per cent) and fewer in education (5 vs. 17 per cent), the distribution of staff among the major subject fields was similar for the junior and senior college staffs, which probably reflects the fact that Minnesota junior colleges are still largely concerned with liberal arts and pre-professional training.

In listing factors that had influenced their decision to teach in their present institution, junior college faculty members often noted that "a position was available" or that "the salary was satisfactory." Occasionally the respondent indicated some non-academic reason, such as "the excellent hunting and fishing in northern Minnesota." They were apparently less swayed than colleagues elsewhere by the reputation or general atmosphere of the school, by opportunities to teach courses of particular interest, or by the chance to combine some research with their duties.

Their professional activities also differed significantly from those reported by staff members in the other types of institutions. Junior college teachers gave a higher percentage of their working time to teaching (74 vs. 63 per cent) and to other student services such as counseling and work with various clubs and sports. They devoted less time to research, which is not surprising in view of their median credit load of 13.6 hours and median weekly class contact hours of 17.3 hours (five hours above that typically reported by teachers in the four-year colleges). And to a much greater extent than in the latter

institutions, this load included four or five different courses each term, some representing fields for which the teacher lacked interest or felt inadequately prepared. As one teacher observed, "We have far too little time for studying and reading . . . all one can do is to keep up with the daily work." This sense of pressure was often intensified by heavy community responsibilities, sometimes involving two to five talks a week to civic and professional groups.

Most junior college faculty members (59 vs. 41 per cent for the four-year colleges) said that they would like to spend still more time on teaching, counseling and other student services if they were able to modify the present use of their working hours. This contrasts sharply with the stress which most faculty members elsewhere would give to research (specified by only half as many junior college as four-year college people).

When queried about activities that might receive less time, almost two-fifths of both the junior and four-year college groups suggested no change in their distribution of time. Approximately a third of both groups thought that committee and administrative services should get less time. As one experienced junior college teacher stated it, "The faculty here is run ragged with committee assignments which consume a great deal of time that should be devoted to teaching or preparation for teaching." But another person in the same school, while admitting the seriousness of the situation, commented, "I don't know what can be done to solve this problem, for I am sure that I would object strenuously if decisions regarding college policy were made by the dean alone."

Appraisal of Career Choice. Most faculty members in all types of colleges seemed to be reasonably satisfied with their present careers and anxious to continue in them. Alert to the need for many of the reforms outlined below, the majority of the teachers studied thought that these problems could be resolved with time and that "it would be dull if there were no room for improvement." But those teaching in junior colleges gave a somewhat less enthusiastic endorsement to this field, with only 31 per cent, as compared with 50 per cent of the four-year group, claiming that they were "very satisfied" with their career choice. They also seemed less ready (69 vs. 83 per cent) to reaffirm this choice, given a chance to do so. Of those who did not say this, half expressed uncertainty as to what they would do, sometimes indicating that while they were not dissatisfied enough to search out something else, they would consider an attractive opening in industry or government, if this were offered them. The remaining 14 per cent of junior college teachers felt that they would definitely choose some other field of work. As one embittered science teacher commented, "I had hoped to improve my financial status and prestige, and I now feel disillusioned and trapped . . . I have been forced to the conclusion that there are no advantages for me in this career."

Junior college faculties seem to find their chief satisfactions in teaching and in the stimulus they derive from working with well-motivated students. Some of the interviewees stated these values in such terms as "liking to organize and present materials," "interest in seeing young minds unfold," and "having an opportunity to work with youngsters of serious

purpose." This latter advantage evidently impressed many persons who had been troubled by discipline problems in their earlier high school teaching. One social science teacher summed up the case for teaching by saying, "It is easy to maintain youth when you work with youth every day of the year. Bring the professional pay up to a respectable level, and teaching will be the best profession of all."

Junior college teachers made less mention than colleagues elsewhere of benefits associated with the collegiate environment, although occasional persons commented on the advantages of raising families in an academic community and on what "fine people faculty are to be with socially." Several also cited the freedom they enjoyed as college teachers. . . . "you are left to do things pretty much your own way . . . you don't have to be a clock-watcher." One psychology instructor enlarged upon this, pointing out that "as a one-man department I can do things just as I please, can plan things exactly as I like." Rarely, though, did any junior college teacher single out the intellectual stimulation that he had derived from faculty membership or the encouragement he had received to be a creative scholar. A few persons noted that "this lack of intellectualism" is just as characteristic of many four-year colleges, with "too much emphasis everywhere on the well-rounded person rather than on real intellectual goals."

Faculty members in all four types of colleges identified low salaries as the greatest single cause for dissatisfaction. As one industrial arts teacher in a public junior college summed up the situation, "You spend five or six years in preparation for your job and you find that semi-

skilled laborers make just as much as you do." Similarly, a physics teacher observed that he and his colleagues in mathematics and chemistry were devoting their lives to preparing engineers for industry who would earn several times their salary. In his words, "College teachers are subsidizing industry by training the young people that industry needs to carry on."

Teaching loads resembling those of the lower schools constituted the second major complaint of junior college faculty, as of their colleagues elsewhere. A young psychology instructor, in re-echoing this theme, said, "I can't live up to my own standards, and this is an uncomfortable feeling to be living with . . . kids also are more critical of teaching in college than in high school." Another teacher, in this case a man nearing retirement, lamented his "perpetual feeling of unpreparedness . . . which comes from going to class too often when I am under pressure, and haven't had proper time to prepare."

Other faculty members commented on the difficulties of creating a genuinely collegiate atmosphere when the junior college is housed in the same building as the high school and "the same regulations and pay schedule apply to both groups, leading to petty jealousy between the high school and college staffs." In addition, several noted that junior college teachers must often do "high school hall-policing," "take tickets at games" and "handle details that clerks should manage," that they are seldom granted leaves for further study, and they must usually pay their own expenses to professional meetings. A few scored the unfavorable attitudes of the public and of other professional groups toward teaching and their scant understanding of the special purposes of

the junior college . . . "engineers and doctors look down on teachers, and so do the lawyers."

Suggestions for Recruiting and Holding Qualified Staff. Given an opportunity to suggest ways of building strong staffs, faculty members everywhere stressed the need to raise salaries substantially, to lighten work loads, and to provide other conditions favorable to superior professional service. They clearly did not minimize the seriousness of the problem that colleges would face in bargaining for the relatively small pool of qualified people. As one science teacher observed, "The success propaganda and the stylishness of getting married young and having big families are all working against any kind of 'service motivation' operating in young people's vocational choices." Another said regretfully, "At present, my conscience would not permit me to urge my best students to go into teaching because of the financial sacrifice involved."

Several junior college staff members, probably reflecting on their own experience, urged that graduate work be done earlier and perhaps with a somewhat different emphasis. One science teacher suggested, for example, that "the supply of college science teachers might be increased if more high school teachers were actually majors in some one science . . . which would give them more assurance and competence in teaching." Stronger programs in the liberal arts were also recommended, perhaps with some corresponding cut in the work in professional education. Teachers in the four-year programs were more articulate than their junior college colleagues regarding the need to give faculty members a larger share in policy-making and to allow more

time for reading and scholarly investigation.

Summary and Implications. The present study, which was based on questionnaire and interview data obtained from a random sample of Minnesota faculty members, including 130 persons teaching in the 11 junior colleges of the state, has revealed some important facts about the staffs recruited to these latter institutions.

1. Junior college teachers, to an even greater degree than others, come into college teaching by accident rather than by clear intention.
2. They usually begin their service as high school teachers, pursuing whatever graduate work they take on a part-time basis. In consequence, they seldom secure the amount of advanced training needed for upper-level college posts.
3. Their duties are chiefly centered around teaching and other student services, with loads characteristically so heavy that few manage to complete their advanced degrees or to do scholarly writing.
4. They feel rather keenly the lack of public recognition and appreciation of the services they render and wish to see the role of the two-year college in American society

better understood by other educators and by the general public.

5. Despite formidable handicaps to rendering their best professional services, more than two-thirds of these junior college faculty members said that they were satisfied with their careers and wished to continue in this field. The minority, who were uncertain or who said that they would not again select this field, was significantly larger than in four-year programs, indicating that junior colleges face special problems in recruiting and holding qualified staff members.

Taken as a whole, the findings of this study indicate the need to publicize the purposes and programs of junior colleges and to recruit able young people to the faculties of these institutions. As a relatively new form of higher education, the junior or community college must make special effort to interpret its program to prospective faculty members, students, and the general public. It must also provide conditions of work that will help to recruit and develop teachers with real potential for such service. Only as junior colleges do these things effectively will they fulfill their distinctive mission in American higher education.